Results of the 2019 Survey of New Executives in the Public Service

January 2020

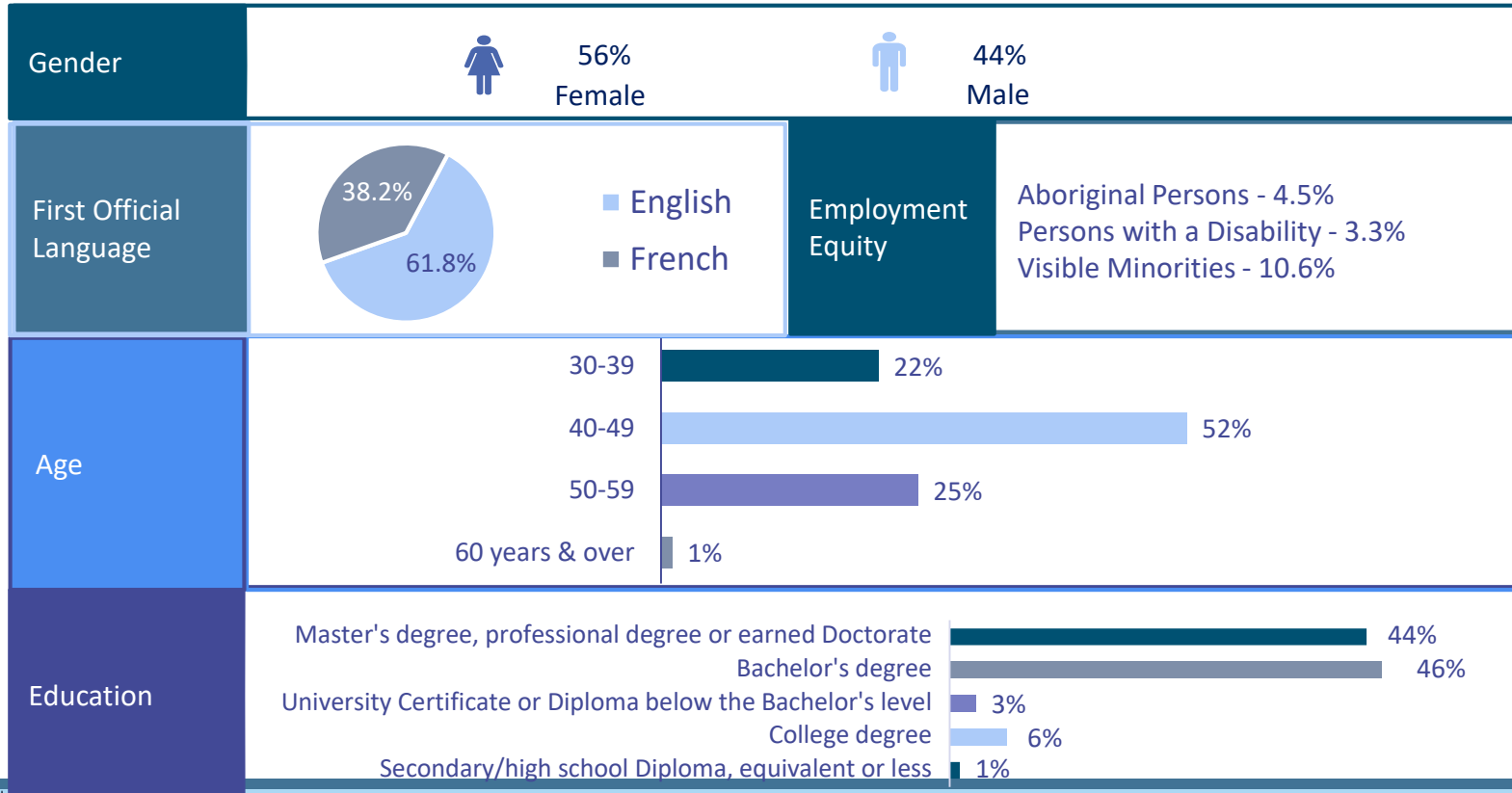# Survey of New Executives – Overview

The 4th annual survey of new Executives was launched electronically on October 30th, 2019 to 620 Executives appointed between July 1st, 2018 and June 30th, 2019.

A total of 236 respondents completed the survey by December 2nd, 2019, a response rate of 36% (2018 – 36%)
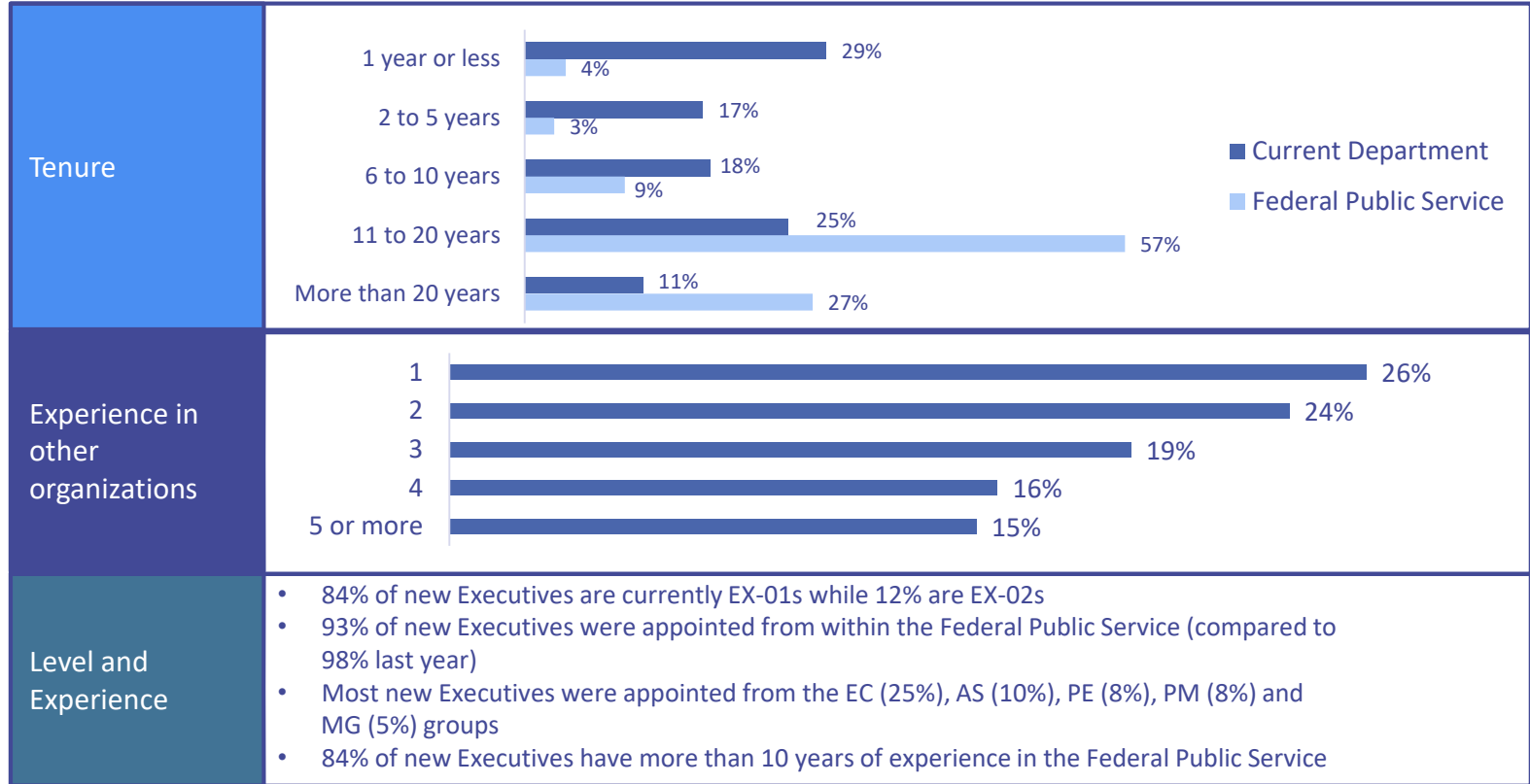
The goal of the survey was to seek the views and input of new Executives on joining the Executive ranks and to broaden our understanding of what is important to them. This includes identifying the challenges they face and obtaining feedback on how the Federal Public Service and APEX can better support them.

Key questions centered around the reasons for wanting to become an Executive, the challenges facing the community, the developmental opportunities provided and their onboarding experience into the Executive ranks. In collaboration with the Canada School of Public Service, new questions were also included regarding learning support and what type of training would be most beneficial to new Executives.

Profile of Survey Respondents

Gender	56% Female		44% Male

First Official Language

- English 61.8%
- French 38.2%

Employment Equity

Aboriginal Persons - 4.5%
Persons with a Disability - 3.3%
Visible Minorities - 10.6%

Age

- 30-39: 22%
- 40-49: 52%
- 50-59: 25%
- 60 years & over: 1%

Education

- Master's degree, professional degree or earned Doctorate: 44%
- Bachelor's degree: 46%
- University Certificate or Diploma below the Bachelor's level: 3%
- College degree: 6%
- Secondary/high school Diploma, equivalent or less: 1%

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Profile of Survey Respondents (continued)

Tenure	**1 year or less**: Current Department 29%, Federal Public Service 4% **2 to 5 years**: Current Department 17%, Federal Public Service 3% **6 to 10 years**: Current Department 18%, Federal Public Service 9% **11 to 20 years**: Current Department 25%, Federal Public Service 57% **More than 20 years**: Current Department 11%, Federal Public Service 27% ■ Current Department ■ Federal Public Service
Experience in other organizations	**1**: 26% **2**: 24% **3**: 19% **4**: 16% **5 or more**: 15%
Level and Experience	• 84% of new Executives are currently EX-01s while 12% are EX-02s • 93% of new Executives were appointed from within the Federal Public Service (compared to 98% last year) • Most new Executives were appointed from the EC (25%), AS (10%), PE (8%), PM (8%) and MG (5%) groups • 84% of new Executives have more than 10 years of experience in the Federal Public Service

Appointment Process

70% of new Executives were appointed via an internal process in their current Department/Agency

25% of new Executives were appointed to the position in a new Department/Agency

5% of new Executives were appointed from outside the Federal Public Service

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Main Reasons for Becoming an Executive

For increased challenges
(Ranked #1 in 2018)

To use my experience and expertise
(Ranked #3 in 2018)

To participate in senior level decision making
(Ranked #2 in 2018)

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Challenges

Most important challenges facing the new Executive community:

🏠 ↔️	**Work-life balance** (Ranked # 1 in 2018)
👥 ⬆️	**People Management** (Ranked # 3 in 2018)
🧩 ⬇️	**Attracting & retaining talent** (Ranked # 2 in 2018)
🚻 ↔️	**Stress Management** (Ranked # 4 in 2018)

29% of new Executives feel well-equipped to address these challenges based on their current knowledge and skill level.

65% feel somewhat well equipped while 7% feel they are not well equipped

Development Opportunities

Development opportunities that new Executives **undertook** and found to be extremely or very helpful in preparing them for their Executive role:

Development opportunities that new Executives **did not** undertake but feel would have helped them prepare for their Executive role:

- Senior Management Exposure
- Acting Assignments
- Leadership Training
- Coaching

- Mentoring
- Job Shadowing
- Coaching
- Language Training
- Leadership Training

Learning programs and support identified that would have been beneficial in the first 24 months as an Executive included: Financial Management (budgets, authorities and delegations), Human Resources (labour relations and performance management) and Leadership Training.

Onboarding Experience

26% of respondents indicated receiving formal onboarding
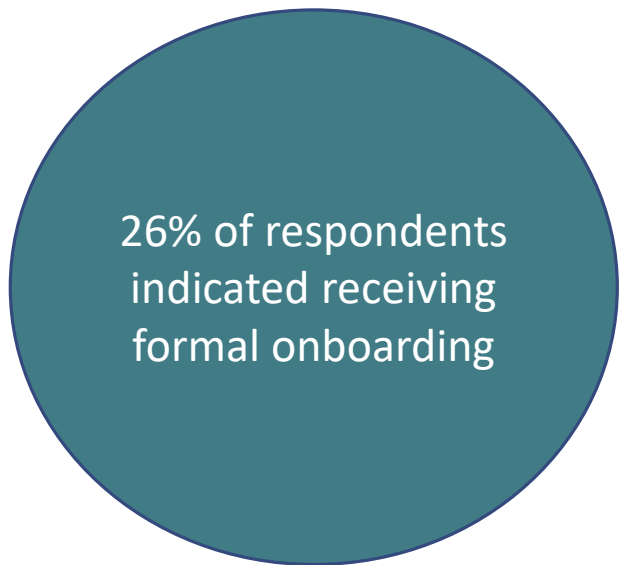
Aspects of onboarding with which Executives were most satisfied*:

The welcome received from employees – 78% (2018 – 80%)

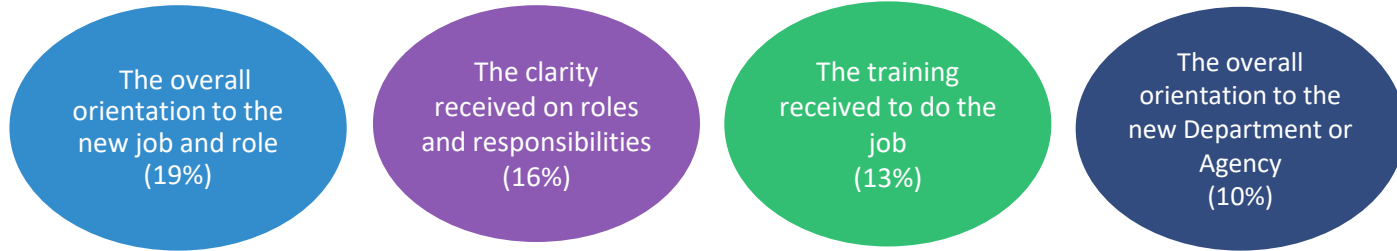The readiness and functionality of the new workspace – 63% (2018 – 62%)

On the job learning – 62% (2018 – 73%)

The welcome received from Senior management – 58% (2018 – 64%)

*Satisfied includes those who indicated they were 'somewhat' and 'very' satisfied

Onboarding Experience (continued)

Aspects of onboarding with which new Executives were the least satisfied:

The overall orientation to the new job and role (19%)

The clarity received on roles and responsibilities (16%)

The training received to do the job (13%)

The overall orientation to the new Department or Agency (10%)

Dissatisfied includes those who indicated they were 'very' and 'somewhat' dissatisfied.

With respect to the training received to do the job, respondents were dissatisfied with:

❖ The scope and content of the New Director's Program
❖ The absence of materials specific to their position (i.e. policies/procedures, work description, org. chart etc.)
❖ The lack of training on performance management and the Executive Talent Management System (ETMS)
❖ Insufficient training on human resources (including labor relations), budgeting and delegated authorities
❖ The lack of orientation to the position/Department and absence of formal onboarding

On the Job

New Executives perceived the following statements to be the most accurate in describing their jobs:

My job is a good fit with my skills and knowledge 95% agreed (2018 – 94%)	I am required to think and make decisions quickly 94% agreed (2018 – 94%)	I meet regularly with my superior(s) to discuss work plans 87% agreed (2018 – 85%)

- Agreed includes those who indicated they 'somewhat' agreed or 'strongly' agreed with the statement

75% of respondents indicated receiving useful feedback from their supervisors (2018 – 73%) but only 28% agreed that they are able to complete their assigned workload during regular working hours (2018 – 30%)

Job Satisfaction

87% of new Executives were very or somewhat satisfied with their job in general
(2018 – 88%)
68% were satisfied with the flexibility of work hours
(2018 – 64%)

However, 30% were dissatisfied with their current workload, and 31% were dissatisfied with the number of hours worked.
(2018 – 29% and 28% respectfully)

Use of Personal Devices

Just over 17% of new Executives use their personal electronic devices (phone, tablet, computer etc.) for work purposes (down from 35% in 2018). Main reasons for the use of personal devices include:

Availability outside working hours and ability to work remotely	Better connectivity, coverage and ease of use	Personal convenience (not having to bring equipment back and forth)

Pay and Compensation - Phoenix

46% of respondents indicated that staff pay/compensation have been affected to a large/very large extent by Phoenix (48% – 2018)

25% of respondents were largely satisfied with the support provided by their Department but only 9% were satisfied with support received from the Pay Centre (24% and 8% - 2018)

68% of the new Executives surveyed spent 1 to 3 hours weekly (on average) dealing with their own pay/compensation issues or those of their staff

Summary of Key Results

❑ The main reasons identified by respondents for becoming an Executive were 'for increased challenges', 'to use their experience and expertise' and 'to participate in senior level decision making'.

❑ The most important challenges facing Executives continue to be work-life balance, people management, attracting and retaining talent, and stress management

❑ Although only 26% of new Executives indicated having received formal onboarding, 70% of those were somewhat or very satisfied with the experience. Most were satisfied with the welcome received from their employees and the readiness and functionality of their new workspace.

❑ While over 86% of new Executives are very or somewhat satisfied with their jobs in general, only 4% strongly agreed that they could complete their assigned workload within normal working hours. 30% were dissatisfied with the workload and 31% with the number of hours worked

❑ New Executives continue to use their own personal electronic devices for work purposes and continue to deal with pay/compensation issues (both their own, as well as those of their staff).

Issues for Consideration

Some key feedback and comments provided by survey respondents about the various aspects of their experience joining the Executive ranks included the following:

❑ Expectations of Executives to do "more with less" are out of balance with the resources provided

❑ The requirements of the job and associated workload are made more difficult by the lack of alternative/flexible work arrangements for Executives

❑ Development opportunities are excellent in principle, however the reality is that there is little time to take advantage of them given the demands of the work environment

❑ Senior managers don't have time, or aren't interested in spending time with new Executives – as a result, the requirements of the position need to be learned quickly and "on-the-fly"

❑ Much of the training provided to Executives does not reflect the reality of entering the Executive ranks – Executives are under increased pressure, less protected, and expected to deliver more, often to the detriment of their work-life balance and mental health

Next Steps

The survey results summarized in this deck will be shared with the 620 new Executives appointed during the identified timeframe (i.e. July 1st, 2018 to June 30th, 2019) and will be posted to the APEX website.

Presentations will be made to the APEX Board of Directors, the Departmental Organizational Representatives and the Department/Agency Heads of Executive Services, who will be encouraged to share these results with their organizations.

The results will be shared with the Canada School of Public Service, as well as the Clerk of the Privy Council and the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (OCHRO).

A Focus Group of select respondents will be organized in order to provide them with an opportunity to share their experiences, to discuss some of the issues raised in the survey and to assist in the development of potential recommendations.

Finally, as the 2019 Survey of new Executives is the 4th consecutive survey of its kind, an analysis of the year over year data will be initiated in order to undertake a trend analysis and (where the consistency of the questions allows) to present 5-year trend data as part of the 2020 Survey.

APEX Resources

APEX has a variety of on-line resources available to new Executives which may assist in addressing the challenges identified through this survey and with the roles and responsibilities associated with EX positions. These include:

APEX's Guide for Executives:

https://apex.gc.ca/resources/compendium-ex-resources/

Information on EX Compensation:

https://apex.gc.ca/resources/compensation/

Advisory Services

https://apex.gc.ca/advisory-services/

In addition, other resource materials and information highlighting planned learning events and activities on a variety of topics of interest to Executives, are available on the APEX website: www.apex.gc.ca